

## **Sex Worker Support & Advocacy**

Stella: Tools by and for Sex Workers  
[www.chezstella.org](http://www.chezstella.org)

SWAN Vancouver Society  
[www.swanvancouver.ca](http://www.swanvancouver.ca)  
Tel: 604-719-6343

WISH Drop-In Centre  
[www.wish-vancouver.net](http://www.wish-vancouver.net)  
Tel: 604-669-WISH (9474)

PACE  
[www.pace-society.org](http://www.pace-society.org)  
Sex Worker Support Line: 604-786-5437

The Naked Truth  
[www.nakedtruth.ca](http://www.nakedtruth.ca)

Trade Secrets Guide  
[www.tradesecretsguide.blogspot.ca](http://www.tradesecretsguide.blogspot.ca)

## **Anti-Violence Services**

Battered Women's Support Services  
[www.bwss.org](http://www.bwss.org)  
Toll-Free Crisis & Intake Line: 1-855-687-1868

WAVAW Rape Crisis Centre  
[www.wavaw.ca](http://www.wavaw.ca)  
Toll-Free 24-hour Crisis Line: 1-877-392-7583  
\*Note: Sex-work stance is similar to Rape Relief

UBC Sexual Assault Support Centre  
[www.ams.ubc.ca/services/sexual-assault-support-centre/](http://www.ams.ubc.ca/services/sexual-assault-support-centre/)  
Tel: 604-827-5180

## **Vancouver Rape Relief does not support all survivors.**

**Through official policy and organizational culture as well as public statements and actions, Vancouver Rape Relief has made it clear that they do not provide support and services to trans women, sex workers, and survivors who use substances.**

## **We believe that every survivor deserves support.**

Within rape culture, survivors of sexual violence are questioned, interrogated, challenged, dismissed, and blamed for their experiences of violence. While Rape Relief claims to work against rape culture, they nonetheless continue to discount many survivors' experiences of sexual violence by asserting a narrow and exclusionary definition of what "counts" as sexual violence, who can experience sexual violence, and who deserves access to their services.

Positioning themselves as a gate-keeper of (already scarce and underfunded) sexual assault support services, Rape Relief refuses people in crisis access to vital resources. In particular, trans women, sex workers, and survivors who use substances are routinely denied access to Rape Relief's crisis line, transition house, and advocacy services, as well as volunteer and staff positions within the organization. These specific communities excluded by Rape Relief include survivors who experience disproportionate rates of violence and who face multiple barriers to accessing support and services.

This is unacceptable.

All survivors of sexual violence deserve access to non-judgemental and self-directed support and services. All survivors have the right to define their own needs and shape their own process of safety, support, and healing.

What Rape Relief misses in their claim that only cisgender women (referred to by Rape Relief as "women-born-women") experience rape in both a personal way through the violence on their bodies, as well as in a systemic way through living in a patriarchy which tells them they are worth less than men, is that all rapes are political.

While patriarchy is key to driving a culture that perpetuates rape (i.e., rape culture), it is no more central than is colonization, ableism, fat phobia, homophobia, heterosexism, transphobia, ageism, classism and other oppressions. For example, the rates of Aboriginal women who are sexually assaulted in Canada are much higher than the rates of white women who are sexually assaulted. This is not just because of patriarchy; this is because of how patriarchy intersects with colonialism in telling people - particularly heterosexual, able-bodied white men - that the bodies of Aboriginal women are up for grabs. When somebody is raped because of their identity as a gay man, a trans woman, a genderqueer individual, or even a child, this rape is inherently political - just as political as the sexual assaults that Rape Relief addresses and does something about.

The big problem with refusing to acknowledge how all sexual assaults happen in a rape culture isn't just ignoring certain parts of the population. Although it's painful for people to be told that their rape doesn't matter as much as someone else's - and make no mistake, Rape Relief does say that a cisgender woman's rape matters more than anyone else's - what's also harmful is that this attitude actually contributes to a rape culture. Rape culture is about dehumanizing certain people, about making them targets for sexualized violence, about teaching some people that they are entitled to the bodies of others... And when we outwardly deny that there are many ways that people are oppressed and that each of these oppressions are equally important and equally real, we contribute to the dehumanization that causes sexual assault in the first place. In other words, Rape Relief's attitudes toward transgender folks, sex workers, survivors who use substances, and others contributes to rape culture.

## Online Resources

*Whipping Girl: A Transsexual Woman on Sexism and the Scapegoating of Femininity* by Julia Serano  
<http://juliaserano.blogspot.ca/>

*Trans Inclusion Policy for Women's Organizations* by the Trans Alliance Society  
<http://www.transalliancesociety.org/education/documents/02womenpolicy.pdf>

*Support Zine* PDF  
<http://www.phillyspiced.net/sites/default/files/ZINE%20Support.pdf>

*Ask First: Resources for Supporters, Survivors, and Perpetrators of Sexual Assault* Zine PDF  
<http://zinelibrary.info/ask-first>

*Supporting a Survivor of Sexual Assault* Zine PDF  
<http://zinelibrary.info/supporting-survivor-sexual-assault>

INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence  
[www.incite-national.org](http://www.incite-national.org)

*The Revolution Starts at Home* Zine PDF  
[http://www.incite-national.org/media/docs/0985\\_revolution-starts-at-home.pdf](http://www.incite-national.org/media/docs/0985_revolution-starts-at-home.pdf)

*Making Connections: The Anti-Violence Movement Actively Resisting the Prison Industrial Complex* Zine PDF  
[http://www.incite-national.org/media/docs/9261\\_anti-prisonbrochure.pdf](http://www.incite-national.org/media/docs/9261_anti-prisonbrochure.pdf)